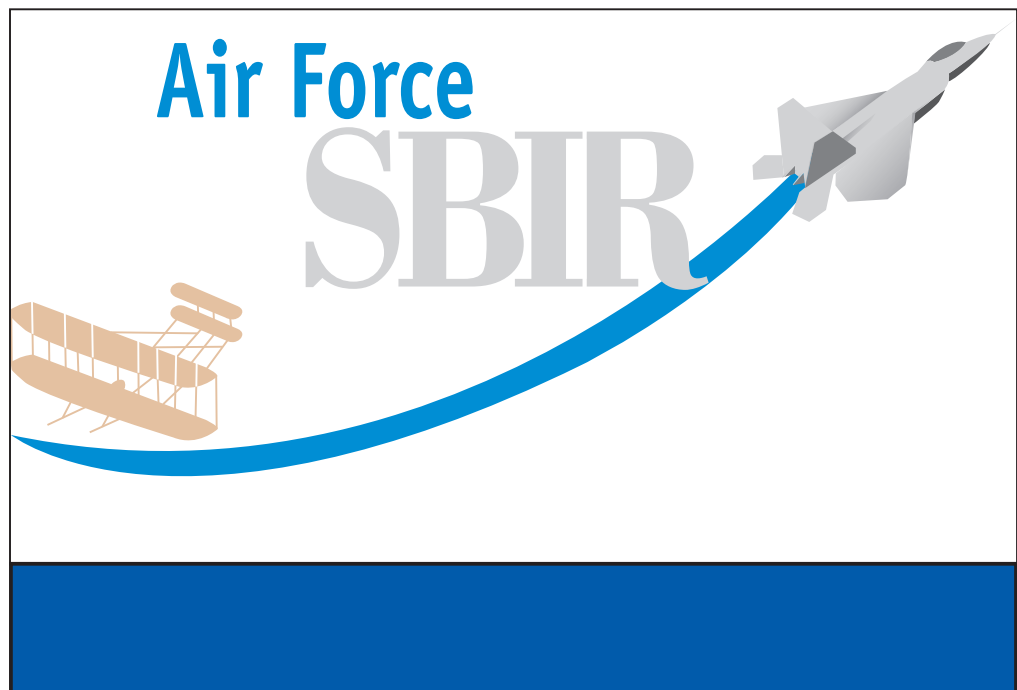# Air Force Research Laboratory | AFRL

Science and Technology for Tomorrow's Aerospace Forces

Success Story

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM GROWS

Congress mandated the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program in the late 1980's and recently renewed the program until fiscal year 2008. The program grew from a few million dollars to $200M. Throughout its history, the Air Force has taken the lead in its part of the Department of Defense (DOD) program, introducing many management initiatives to help manage this growth.

Accomplishment
Within the past few years, the Air Force (AF) established the AF SBIR Program Management team within AFRL headquarters. Program managers and contracting officers in every AFRL Technology Directorate and at every product, test, and logistics center in the Air Force support this team.

The team instituted the allocation of the majority of SBIR topics to the Program Executive Officers and the Designated Acquisition Commanders. This move provides increased opportunities for SBIR topics to become more than just research and development projects. The SBIR team now ties the topics to operational technology requirements. This, in turn, should result in an increase in commercialization of the technologies through technology transition.

Background
The AF manages the largest SBIR program within the DOD (AF $200M, Navy $125M, Army $110M). AF SBIR accounts for over 700 contracts each year. With this growth in program breadth and scope, SBIR required improved communication and management tools for field managers.

On the communications side, the team created the quarterly Air Force SBIR Advantage newsletter for people in senior positions in the science and technology community and in the acquisition community in both the AF and DOD. The newsletter's purpose is to make SBIR more accessible and to quickly disseminate information about program philosophy and program changes.

For management tools, the team created the web-based SBIR Manager's Desk Guide. This is a detailed description of all the processes, lessons learned, and best practices in order to make the field manager's job easier. The team updated the SBIR database, adding many features to enhance usability. The team also developed a new web-based tool for sharing ideas of potential topics. This tool doubles as the topic submission module, thereby reducing the need for reams of paper.

For additional information, please check the AF SBIR web site at *http://www.afrl.af.mil/sbir/index.htm* and the AF SBIR intranet site at *https://aftech.afrl.af.mil/sbir/index.htm.*

Additional information
To receive more information about this or other activities in the Air Force Research Laboratory, contact TECH CONNECT, AFRL/XPTT, (800) 203-6451 and you will be directed to the appropriate laboratory expert. (01-XP-02)